(iii) Excise duty on refined edible oils/vanaspati/interesterified fat, etc. has been withdrawn;

(iv) Import duty on vanaspati, bakery shortening, interesterified fat, margarine has been raised from 30% to 80%.

(v) During the ongoing negotiations with Sri Lanka under Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CERA), India has *inter-alia* proposed to Sri Lanka for formalizing Voluntary Export Restraint (VER) of import of Vanaspati from Sri Lanka to India.

Certification for arecanut import by CPCRI

2730. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) has certified during 2006 that the arecanut imported are of inferior quality;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any regulatory body to control arecanut import and check its quality; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, whether steps would be taken to constitute such a body?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) CPCRI has not certified any imported arecanut samples which are of inferior quality during the year 2006.

(c) and (d) Arecanut is freely importable under the Foreign Trade Policy. CPCRI is not a regulatory authority to control arecanut imports and check its' quality. The Plant Quarantine Authority under Department of Agriculture and Cooperation inspect import consignments to ensure that they are free from pests and diseases. Any import consignments not fulfilling the requirements of plant quarantine is either deported or destroyed or treated to ensure mortality of any quarantine pests before allowing imports. Since institutional arrangements for fulfilling the requirements of Plant Quarantine exists, no further steps are required.